



Ranger-Led Activities—Winter 2014, through Spring 2015

Join the Big Cypress staff for programs that explore the wonders of the Big Cypress Swamp. For details on activities, visit the Big Cypress National Preserve website at [www.nps.gov/bicy](http://www.nps.gov/bicy). To make reservations, please call: 239-695-4758, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. Reservations are accepted up to 14 days in advance of the activity date and are free. Programs begin November 22, 2014, and extend through April 05, 2015.\*

Activity Descriptions	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<b>Who’s Home?</b> –1:00 & 2:00 pm, 15 minute talk. Join a park ranger or a volunteer at the H.P. Williams wildlife viewing platform to discover who’s home. Sightings often include alligators, turtles, fishes and colorful wading birds.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Scales, Teeth &amp; a Big Tail!</b> –1:00 & 2:00 pm, 15 minute talk. Join a park ranger or a volunteer on the Oasis Visitor Center boardwalk to learn about our largest native freshwater reptile, the alligator. Then, take a stroll through the native plant and butterfly garden. Discoveries abound!	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Mangroves &amp; Manatees!</b> –2:00 & 3:00 pm, 15 minute talk. Join a park ranger or a volunteer at the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center viewing platform to learn about one of our largest native marine mammals, the manatee and its primary habitat.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Cypress Sights &amp; Sounds–Kirby Storter Boardwalk Stroll</b> –10:00 am on Thursday, Friday & Saturday (1 hour). Explore a cypress forest while venturing into the heart of a cypress strand on this one-mile round-trip leisurely stroll. Water, binoculars and insect repellent recommended. Meet at the boardwalk trailhead along US-41.					X	X	X
<b>Wet &amp; Wild Swamp Walks</b> –10:00 am (2 hours). This is a great way to explore the swamp and discover what’s beyond the road! Cypress knees and sawgrass make long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes and shoes. Meet at the Oasis Visitor Center. <b>Reservations required.</b>		X					X
<b>Heart of the Swamp Canoe Trips</b> –November 29 through March 29, at 10:00 am (4–5 hours). We’ll provide canoes and equipment, or bring your own. Come prepared with water, lunch, binoculars, sun protection, insect repellent and a sense of adventure. Trips vary by weather, water level, tide and park ranger’s choice of location and duration. Knowing canoeing basics is helpful. <b>Reservations required.</b>	X			X			X
<b>Walk on the Wild Side-Deep Lake Hike</b> –1:00 pm (2 hours). Introduces swamp history. Deep Lake is a rare natural sinkhole lake. The hike runs through lush greenery in bear country. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes and shoes. Come prepared with water, food, binoculars, sun protection and insect repellent. Hikes begin December 14, through March 22, alternating Sundays with the Gator Hook hike. <b>Reservations required.</b>	X						
<b>Walk on the Wild Side-Gator Hook Hike</b> –1:00 pm (3 hours). Gator Hook Strand is a rugged wet trail with a diversity of plants. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes and shoes. Come prepared with water, food, binoculars, sun protection and insect repellent. Hikes begin December 21, through March 29, alternating Sundays with the Deep Lake hike. <b>Reservations required.</b>	X						
<b>Birding in the Swamp</b> –December 14, January 18, February 15, March 15, at 9:00 am (2 hours). A park ranger will introduce field guides and birding techniques. You’ll explore a mile round-trip walk to search for elusive and easily seen “swamp jewels.” Look, listen, learn, and share stories. Bring binoculars, water, and a birding field guide. Meet at Kirby Storter Boardwalk. <b>Reservations required.</b> Call 239-695-1201.	X						



\*Due to unforeseen circumstances this schedule is subject to change.





Activity Descriptions Continued...	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<b>Bear Island Bike Ride</b> —January 17, February 14, and March 14, at 10:00 am (5-6 hours). Ride on a gravel graded road over rough terrain. Bring your bike, water, food, and sun protection. Meet a park ranger at the Bear Island access point along SR-29, four miles north of I-75. Vistas of cypress, pines and sawgrass abound. <b>Reservations required.</b>							X
<b>Hike to the Big Trees—Old Growth Cypress</b> —January 3, February 7, and March 7, at 9:00 am (6-7 hours). <u>Strenuous</u> eight-mile round-trip hike on the Florida Trail from Oasis Visitor Center, where tall ferns, epiphytes, and old growth trees that escaped the loggers’ saws, still stand. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring lunch, water, sun protection, and change of clothes for your ride home. Meet at Oasis Visitor Center. <b>Reservations required.</b> Call 239-695-1201.							X
<b>The Right Route—Off-Road Vehicle Tour</b> —Learn more about Big Cypress, Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace ethics, while operating your own off-road vehicle—a traditional way to explore the area. Learn about flora/fauna along Bear Island backcountry trails. <b>Proper permits required. Call for availability and additional information.</b>							
<b>Campfire Programs</b> —7:00 pm (1 hour). Alternating campgrounds. Midway Campground—January 9 & 23, February 6 & 20, March 6. Monument Campground—January 16 & 30, February 13 & 27, March 13. Ranger choice for talk topics. Some seating available, or bring your own folding chair. Insect repellent optional.						X	

Activities on your own

SAVE THE DATE!

- Safety first

Before your adventure begins always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. Remember to fill out a backcountry permit if you are entering at one of the backcountry access points. To enjoy your visit come prepared by bringing water, food, sturdy shoes, sun protection, and insect repellent. Always be aware of your surroundings and be respectful of wildlife.
- Wildlife viewing

While visiting you may see a multitude of bird life, or alligators and the fish they prey on. Observe wildlife respectfully and never attempt to feed or approach wild animals! Wildlife observation platforms are located at the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, H.P. Williams Roadside Park, Kirby Storter Roadside Park, and at Oasis Visitor Center.
- Driving

Excellent wildlife viewing by car may be found along the Turner River/Birdon Road loop, starting at H.P. Williams-17 miles in length. Loop Road is another great option-24 miles in length. These gravel roads offer views of national preserve animal life and subtropical habitats. Help protect wildlife by observing the speed limit. Stop by Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, or Oasis Visitor Center for more information.
- Hiking

The Florida National Scenic Trail runs through the heart of Big Cypress, presenting excellent backpacking opportunities. Fire Prairie Trail is five miles round trip and is found off of the northern end of Turner River Road, providing superb views of several of South Florida’s natural habitats.
- Canoeing

Explore the waters of Big Cypress by bringing your own canoe or kayak, or renting them in nearby communities. The access for Turner River Canoe Trail is located along US-41. Halfway Creek Canoe Trail offers a saltwater option with the ramp located off of US-41 at the end of Seagrape Drive, three miles east of SR-29. Typical canoe trips in the area will take a minimum of two to three hours.
- Biking

Within the Preserve, many of the gravel roads off of Tamiami Trail, and several of the off-road vehicle trails, provide opportunities for exploration by bicycle. The Bear Island Grade, accessible from SR-29, is a popular route. While biking, please be aware of traffic. While on backcountry trails yield to hikers and off-road vehicles. For more details on bike riding in the national preserve, please ask a park ranger.
- Tamiami Trail Triathlon

Bicycle the 15-mile loop at Shark Valley Visitor Center, hike three miles of trail at Oasis Visitor Center and paddle roundtrip from Gulf Coast Visitor Center to Sandfly Island. Complete all three activities and earn the title “Tamiami Trail Triathlon Finisher.” Bring your own bicycle, canoe/kayak, or rent one. For additional information, inquire at any of the three visitor centers.

Join us for the Third Annual

Big Cypress Star Party

Fridays & Saturdays

- December 6

- January 23

- February 21

- March 20

Call for times

Explore constellations, meteor showers, and more with park rangers and astronomers of South Florida Astronomer Association

FREE

33000 Tamiami Trail East

Ochopee, FL 34141

Save the Date!

The 4th Annual Swamp Heritage Festival

Swamp Heritage Festival

Living History Demonstrations • Indoor & Outdoor Exhibits • Informative Presentations • Live Music • Local Food Vendors

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2014

BIG CYPRESS SWAMP WELCOME CENTER

10:30am - 4:00pm

SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL PARKS TRUST

FLORIDA NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION

www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/SwampHeritageFestival.htm

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